

FREEBG4.TXT

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**          -> FREEBAGE IV <-          **
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**          -> BOOTLEGGAGE <-          **
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**          -> by DISMAY <-            **
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**                                     5/11/89 **
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Welcome to Freebage IV! The fourth file in the Freebage series. If you don't have any of the first three, get em while you can! The first two explain techniques of getting things for free. The third is a story about the use of these techniques by telling about getting into the Super Bowl for free. It's quite a long file, and i
s all TRUE!

Ok, this is entitled "Bootleggage". Bootleggage discusses taping and bootlegging concerts. If you have ever tried this, you know it can be hard. The outcome can be very profitable, too, if you get a good tape and the music is "desirable" to bootleg collectors. So, on with Freebage IV: Bootleggage!

01!

Your favorite band is coming to town and you got great tickets. You haven't seen them in years, and it's probably the last time they will tour. You manage to sneak in y
our
walkman recorder into the concert hoping to preserve these moments in history. When it's all over you can't wait to hear how it all came out. You run to the parking lot and pop the tape in your car deck. You rewind it with fury, you can't fucking wait! You stop it in the middle to see how it sounds. Hmmm..this can't be right, it's like listening to bugs in a tin can! Somehow the whole thing got fucked up. It must be the deck, you think to yourself. Well, it's too late now to do anything about it,
you made a two hour
recording of large reverberations and crowd noise.

So, what can you do to get a good tape out of a concert? The concepts are fairly simple. It all depends on several things, though, but once you are familiar with them you can

FREEBG4.TXT

achieve high-fidelity recordings even if the hall is an echo pit.

Huh?

Okay. First thing that you need is a GOOD deck. Not something you bought at a flea market that has a little slit in it labeled "MIC". You need something that AT LEAST records in stereo. That's (if you didn't know) where you are recording two channels at once. You can pay anywhere from \$50.00 to \$500.00 for one of these. The price usually depends on the brand name and the size of the deck. Also it depends on the features. If you have the money to get a nice one (or some other method of getting one), get it. It will do much better in the long run. When looking for a deck you will want to look for these things:

- * 2 Microphone Jacks, labeled L and R, or a jack that has a stereo adapter to be used with L and R microphones.

- * Dolby of some sort. I like to use Dolby C. Dolby B is good also, but any will help.

- * Variable level controls. This is so you can adjust the input levels. Decks with automatic levels record all one volume, and then when the sound drops out, the levels rise, also you get a drop out when a loud sound is made, knocking the levels down until they can raise back up to a desired level.

- * Speed control. This is good for tuning the tape, or changing speeds. Also, you can maybe get a better frequency response if you run the tape at the fastest speed, but then you have to use the same deck to make copied of the tape.

- * A radio on the deck. This is because if you get stopped with it at the door and they ask what it is just say "a radio" and tune it in. I have told them that a couple times when caught, and they say "I guess radios are allowed, just not tape decks". (Yea most of them are dumb asses) This works good with the very small tape decks.

Alright, if you get a deck with these things you should be set. The levels aren't that important, only if you are striving for a really good tape to maybe commercialize. You

FREEBG4.TXT

do have to remember that some places confiscate decks if they catch you sneaking one in, so be ready to lose it. If you can't afford a real expensive one, a cheaper one will do until you get used to sneaking them into shows.

Microphones. You gotta get some good ones, not little tape recorder ones that you get with those voice recorders,

but ones made for music recording. I have used some Radio Shack mic's, the ones that look like magic markers, only longer. They are very thin. They require one AA (I think, the real small ones) battery each, and have a long cord. You need to get two of them, to use the stereo sound option. If you have a deck with just one plug, you need to make an adapter that will let you plug the two mic's in and get stereo sound. This isn't hard to do, you can even buy a cable for

it from Radio Shack for like 5 bucks. Oh, the mic's are like 19.95 each. What is good about the microphones is that they are small and can be fit into your shoes upon entering a show. I have also used the "2 headed" stereo microphone from Radio Shack. It works okay, but is kind of awkward to sneak in. When you have the deck and the mic's you are set, all you need to do is get the supplies, tapes and batteries.

Tapes make a big difference in the sound quality of the recording. Don't use a cheap tape. A good tape can make you some bucks, so don't get something that won't sound good. I always use Denon metal tapes, 60 minutes. Longer tapes can get eaten easily in a walkman type deck, and since most people at a show will be moving around a bit, you will be most likely shaking the deck a little. This improves the chances of getting the tape sucked up. A 60 minute is a good size without the same chances of getting eaten. Batteries are easy to get too.. I'm sure you know which are good, get some good alkaline ones, and make sure that you are carrying a couple sets. It's not a waste to have too many batteries, you can always use them next time.

I'm Losing my Mind!

It's the day of the show and you need to plan your entrance. If you live up north, chances are that it will be

FREEBG4.TXT

cold. Then you can wear a heavy jacket. This is where a small deck will be good. I have used heavy jackets to put the deck in the lining in the back of it, with padding all around the deck, so when they pat you down they won't feel it. I don't think I have ever been caught doing it that way. If you don't have a jacket like that, or it's too hot, like it always is here in Florida, you gotta find another place for the deck. Something you can do is go to the show and watch people going in before you decide where to put the deck. Check out the security and watch where they are patting the people down, then put the deck where they aren't feeling. Sometimes they avoid the lower leg, then you can put it in your sock, or maybe they don't reach the back of you, so you can tuck it in your pants in back of you. If you are a large person you have lots of hiding places. I am quite thin, so I have a hard time getting a deck in.

If you are caught with it, don't let them have it! If they find it, act cool about it. Try telling them it's just a radio. They might buy it. If they say "let me see it" then show it to them, but don't let them handle it. Once they grab it, they won't give it back. So don't let them touch it, if they have a problem with it tell them you are taking it back to your car, then wait a while and try to go into a different entrance. If you make sure to watch the guards before you enter the arena, then you should be able to get it in with no problem.

If you are at a show where they are using metal detectors, or wands, you are fucked. You will have to be more drastic. I have heard of people using wheelchairs to get stuff in. The security never would think of searching a wheelchair real good, especially if you make yourself up to look like you are in really bad shape! I used this method once, and it was to get a camcorder into a show. I put it in the bottom case in a wheelchair that looked like it was electric, but it was gutted out so that there would be room. I was all wrapped up in blankets and made up with T-Shirts to match the band, buttons and banners, and drool. I was NOT making fun of handicapped people, I am not like that, but I was only using this method to get my camera in. It worked, too.

FREEBG4.TXT

"I can't fucking breathe in here! There's SO much smoke!!

Now you should be inside. The hard part is over, well at least some of the hard stuff is. Now you have to locate yourself to get a good tape. A lot of people make the simple mistake of not being in the right place to get a good tape. Simply enough, the closer to the amps the better

. This is good because it reduces crowd noise. If you can adjust your deck, make sure you adjust the levels during the opening act. Never let the meters red line or you will get distortion. If you can, get a pair of the really small earphones, the ones that look like earplugs with wires. Then you can "practice" taping by taping the opening band in different places in the auditorium. Then before the main band comes on, review the tape and find out which placement has the best sound. It is important when making a good tape, to try to get as much stereo separation as possible. Often bands will pipe their instruments into the P.A. in stereo, so it is good to pick this up. When making the practice tape, talk into the mic so that you will know where you were. You only have to record in each spot for about 30 seconds. When you have found a good spot, then get ready for the main band!

Alright, one thing that is important about recording, microphone placement. Before you even go to the show you should know where and how you will place your microphones. If you have the two skinny ones I mentioned above, then you can do many things with them. A really good, and simple, place for them to go would be a hat. You just stick them in your hat poking out forwards, and you've got them lined up just where you are looking. The drawbacks to this are if you turn your head around then the sound will "sway" a little. Also, if you are short, you will hear the person behind you yelling at the top of their lungs. This isn't too good.

But, if you are tall, or can stand on top of a chair the whole show, then cool. Another good place for mics is a banner. This is something that you have to plan ahead to do. All you gotta do is make up a banner with the band's logo on it, like you see people waving around, and put it on some sort of pole. Ok, the banner will be strung across a T at the top of the pole. Then, you gotta wire in the microphones at either end of the T. This will result in great stereo, and barely any individual crowd noise. The crowd noise will

FREEBG4.TXT

sound like it should, far away, and only between songs. This method is one of the best for making a really good tape. Just be sure that if you try it that you find a place where when you put the banner up there aren't people behind you yelling for you to move it so they can see. So be sure to make it tall enough. I'll leave some creativity to you.

You should be able to find out how you like to hold the mics. There are many variations. If you are with a friend,

then you can maybe hold one mic each in hats. This works good if you are standing together. You can get good stereo effect if you stand as far apart as the cords will let you.

Now, when you are making the tape, you should be timing from the point when you started it. Be sure that when it is near 30 minutes that you flip the tape very fast. Don't wait for the tape to end, then you will lost valuable time. The reason for this is because the leader tape is usually five seconds, and it takes about two or three seconds to flip the tape. Taking into account the leader tape on each side, you lose about 13 seconds if you wait till the end at least. So, before it gets to the leader, flip the tape. Then you lose maybe only four seconds maximum. You can also tell how close it is by looking at the spools and seeing how much tape is left on the small spool. If it is almost nothing, then flip the muther. Also, when you need to switch to another tape, get it out and ready to pop in so the transfer takes only a

coupe seconds. Have the new tape forwarded past the leader so that you don't lose more time. As soon as you swap tapes, take the one that is full of the recordings, and pop out the tabs so that you don't fuck it up. It's easy to pop in the already used tape when flipping them like this. So take the precaution and pop out the tabs.

Now you should have a pretty good recording of the show, depending on all the things I mentioned above. Congratulate yourself on a job well done.

Flea Market Au Gratin...

You've got a really good tape now, and you want to know what the hell to do with it. Well the first thing you should do is make a copy for yourself to listen to. Don't use the

FREEBG4.TXT

originals to play all the time, especially if you are going to be listening to them in a car. When you make copies, make them on a good deck, or if you used fast speed on your recorder, then you have to use the recorder to make the copies. All this is common sense, so you should be able to make good copies.

Before you go and make copied for all your friends, make sure that there isn't any commercial value to this tape. If you know you can get some money for it, then only give a copy to friends that you can trust, because you don't want them to make the money themselves. It can sometimes be good to sell them at a record store on consignment. There are lots of record stores around that sell bootlegs. They are often ones that will say "collectors" or "used" records. Talk to them about the tape that you have. They will probably want to hear it. Make sure, though, that you trust them. You don't want them to buy one tape then turn around and make multiple copies for themselves to sell.

When you do something like sell a tape at a store, you will need to package it. Often, bootleg tapes are generic looking, with photo copied wrappers. If you make a nice looking package, then you can get more money for it. Also, it's a good idea to make the tape "limited", like only print up 100 or 200, etc. Or if you are going to making a lot, then make the first 100 "special" like make the wrapper color, or number them or something. Things like this are looked for by collectors. The only problem with tapes though is that they aren't too desirable by serious collectors unless they have a really good sound quality or are something unique. Say, for instance, that Blue Oyster Cult is playing a show and you go to tape it, and some nut jumps on stage and sets the singer's hair on fire, and as a result they play a 2 hour version of "Godzilla", then having this on tape will be VERY collectable. It is a bit extreme, but you can see what I mean. Also, it's good when the band mentions where they are at. Like on a Dio tape that I made he screams "It's great to be here in Lakeland Florida!!". Now something like that is cool because people in the area who saw the show would be interested in that tape because they were there and shit.

When you make the wrapper, you can use a copy machine if you don't care about color. It's good to make something that makes fun of the band. People who collect things of just a

FREEBG4.TXT

single band like to find unusual packaging. Find a picture of the band and mix it in with something that doesn't quite fit, like paste them into a picture with a bunch of naked gals. The more creative, the better. A good example of someone who has been exploited to the hilt is Frank Zappa. There are hundreds of Zappa bootlegs floating around. I know a few people who would pay \$30.00 for one even if it's shit, just to have a copy.

Ok, that's tapes, what about albums? If you want to spend the money, you can have the tape pressed into vinyl. This can cost anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand bucks. Most independent record factories will press an album without question. If they do have a problem, then make sure that you don't get the jacket printed there. Get them printed at a printer that you can trust. Bootlegs are very widespread now, and it can be quite

easy to find a manufacturer that will press your tape into a record.

Records are what are most sought after by collectors. If you make a really good tape into some well made albums, then you can make some good cash. The same things that make tapes more desirable make records even more so desirable. Collectors love something "special", like limited edition fold out picture sleeves (expensive to make, but you can sell them for about \$20-40.00 each). Also, colored vinyl is a good thing to do. Some of my favorite bootleg albums are on colored vinyl. I have a few that only the first 10-100 printed were on colored, the rest were on regular black. This is also a good idea to do if you want to make a really first quality bootleg.

Other things, when printing up the labels or sleeves, don't put your name on them! It's hard not to do, because you'd like to have your name known, but don't do it! Also, make sure you list all the songs on the outside of the album, so that when someone finds one, they will

be more apt to purchase it because it has the songs they want. Make lots of liner notes about the show, and how the band was. "Rate" each song... people like a lot of shit on an album, and the more there is the better they are! It's really good if you have pics from the same concert too.

Lights!

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What if you want to video tape? Well, it's harder, mainly because you can't slide a camcorder into your drawers, (at least not yet). So, you have to use other methods. One I mentioned

before, a wheelchair. I think this is the best method, although you may think of something better or equal. If you are going to video, be sure that you have all the little lights taped off on the camera, they can be spotted easily by security. It's not like having a little deck that you can keep down, you will be holding the camera up to head level.

One thing I tried before was simple and effective. I put a wig on the camera, and went out into the field where the crowd was packed in tight. The camera looked like just another head from a distance, and since the security people don't like to get into the crowds, I was safe as can be. The only thing wrong with this was since there was a packed crowd around me, I was bumped a lot, which you don't want on video. You need to find a place that you can remain fairly still.

If you are doing video, make sure that you audio also. As long as you are sneaking in a big camera it won't be anything harder to get in your deck. So then afterwards if you have a

stereo VCR, you can mix the sound in for top-quality audio! A video tape with stereo sound of a big band will get you anywhere from \$50.00 to \$300.00 a pop!

What the fuck?

Well, this has covered just about everything... but.. soundboard tapes. A soundboard tape is a tape that you record off of the soundboard! Simple, eh? These tapes are of the best quality of the band, but they lack crowd noise. If you can get the sound man to record a tape for you, cool, get it.

Soundboard recordings are much more rare than regular ones, so it's a good idea to try to get one.

When you go to a show, try to locate the sound guy. If you want, you can offer him money to record the show, or sometimes they will ask for drugs, etc. Sometimes, though, they will do it for free! I don't know if it's because they get pissed off at the bands, or don't care or what, but when

FREEBG4.TXT

it happens, it's good!

A lot of soundboards have a built in deck. If they got one of those just tell the guy you'd like to record with it, or else bring cables that you know will work in a board. This can be good, but if he records in the board, it may be an unusual tape speed, then you will have to locate someone with an appropriate deck later on. If you have the chance to get a board tape, get it, worry about computability later. If by good luck you can use the built in deck, that means that you can use your own deck to record the regular way, then you have two good, and different, tapes of the show!

Wh

When you listen to a soundboard tape, it's kind of boring. That's because there's no crowd noise, and no overdubs. It's a raw tape of exactly what is being pumped through the monitors. So, you can hear every little thing the band does, from missing a note to talking to each other between songs. Some people have taken a soundboard tape, and a microphoned tape and mixed them into one, so that you get soundboard quality with just a little bit of crowd noise to fill it out just right. This is a lot what bands do

themselves when they make a live album. They record through the board, then add in cheering between the songs, and sometimes boost it during the songs. The only difference is that the bands will most likely put tons of overdubs and echo effects over the live stuff to make them sound better. That's why a good board tape is the ultimate!

There're orbs hovering above my eyes!

Well, I hope that you enjoyed Freebage IV, Bootlegage.
I don't know what'll be next.. someone give me some ideas!
PLEASE!! heh heh So to all you bernsteiners-- good hoarkin!

p.s. Don't mess with the file as per usual

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